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Language Socialization in a Second Language Classroom in Japan

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Abstract

Prior research has demonstrated the relationship between acquisition of language and socialization through language in expert-novice interaction (e.g., Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Ochs, 1996; Ohta, 1994; 1999; Poole, 1992). In this paper, using the framework of language socialization, I examine one JSL (Japanese as a second language) teacher's practices of socializing students into the TL (target language) culture. The data for this study comes from one JSL classroom at an American university in Japan. Analysis of the data has revealed that: (a) the teacher conveyed the students the norms of Japanese classrooms and Japanese culture through her display of affective stance and employment of typical Japanese classroom interactional patterns; however, (b) because of her educational background, a certain aspect of the teacher's teaching practice deviated from the norms of Japanese classrooms.

In the past, Ochs and Schieffelin (e.g., Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Ochs, 1996) have argued the relationship between acquisition of language and socialization through language. The authors' view of language socialization, which is based on their extensive ethnographic work in the U.S. and the South Pacific, works in two ways: *socialization through language* and *socialization to use the language*. What the authors refer to socialization through language is a process in which novices learn to be competent members of a society through participation in daily routines. By taking part of daily routines, novices implicitly receive cultural knowledge through language forms and practices. On the other hand, socialization to use the language is more explicit and it takes place when experts clearly direct novices to use the language according to the social norms.

More recently, some researchers applied this language socialization framework to classroom interaction. Cook (1999) analyzed Japanese monolingual elementary school classrooms, Ohta (1994; 1999) examined JFL (Japanese as a foreign language) classrooms in the U.S., and Poole (1992) looked at ESL (English as a second language) classrooms in the U.S.

In this paper, I will first review two language classroom-based studies, Poole (1992) and Ohta (1999) and discuss the similarities and differences between them. I will then introduce the

present study which looks at one JSL (Japanese as a second language) classroom.

Poole (1992) and Ohta (1999)

In this section, I will review Poole (1992) and Ohta (1999) and discuss the similarities and differences between the two studies.

Poole (1992) examined teacher/student interaction in two ESL classes in light of Ochs and Schieffelin's perspective of language socialization. Poole's research was focused on: (a) teachers' accommodation of students' incompetence; (b) task accomplishment; and (c) teachers' display of asymmetry. Her analysis of the data revealed that overall, routine interactional sequences in the classrooms are consistent with Ochs and Schieffelin's findings from white middle class American (WMCA) adult-child interaction in many ways. Specifically, the two classrooms are similar to WMCA adult-child interaction in that: (a) teachers' accommodation to students is appropriate and pervasive, (b) the teachers gave assistance necessary for the students to accomplish tasks and gave entire credit for completing the tasks, and (c) there was a tendency for teachers to avoid the overt display of power differences.

On the other hand, Ohta (1999) looked at the 14 university Japanese language classes in the period of one academic year. Her focus was to examine the role of interactional routines in the socialization of expression of alignment among the learners. Her analysis revealed that although learners' production of expression of alignment was limited in teacher-fronted contexts, in both teacher-fronted and student-fronted contexts, teachers reallocated turns so that students have opportunities to express alignment with their interlocutors. In addition, her longitudinal data, which was focused on one particular student, showed that through repeated participation in the classroom routines, the student's ability to express follow-up turns grew over one academic year, suggesting a profound impact of the classroom interactional routines upon the acquisition of the adult learner.

Studies by Pool (1992) and Ohta (1999) have similarities in the following four points. First of all, both apply Ochs and Schieffelin's view of language socialization to language classroom studies. Between the two types of language socialization mentioned above, both studies focus on *socialization through language*, in which understanding of cultural norms is expected implicitly through participation in a particular participation structure or through the use of a particular word or phrase in daily routines. Secondly, both studies focus on expert-novice (i.e. teacher-student) asymmetrical interaction in classrooms. Thirdly, both compare 'teacher-fronted' situations with 'student-student' or 'student-fronted' situations. Finally, both look at interactional routines. As the other language socialization studies do, they look for "cultural information not only in the content of discourse but in the organization of discourse as well" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 170).

The two studies have several different points as well. Fist of all, Poole (1992) looks at

second language classroom while Ohta (1999) examines foreign language classroom. Secondly, while Poole's study looks at classrooms of English, Ohta's study looks at classrooms of Japanese. Therefore, while Poole explicitly compares her findings with those by Ochs and Schieffelin on WMCA adult-child interaction, Ohta (1999) employs the framework of language socialization but does not explicitly compare her findings with those by Ochs and Schieffelin. Thirdly, in Poole's study, the focus is on teacher's utterances regarding how teachers encode cultural norms and beliefs in their utterances, while in Ohta's study, the focus is on students' participation in expressing assessment and alignment as a result of teachers' allocation of turns. This difference may be related to the first point. Since Ohta looks at foreign language classrooms, the students do not have the exposure to the language and culture from outside classroom. Therefore, Ohta's finding on the profound impact of the classroom interactional routines upon the acquisition of the adult learner is persuasive. On the other hand, since Poole looks at second language settings, where students may have a lot of exposure to the language and culture outside classrooms, it may be difficult for her to make the same argument. Thirdly, while Poole's study describes what happened in two classrooms at one point of time, Ohta's study examines long-term effects as well. Finally, while Poole focuses on asymmetry of interaction expressed in teacher's utterance, Ohta focuses on extended assessment activity as a tool to express affect in both teachers' and students' utterances.

In the next section, using Poole's study and Ohta's study as a guideline, I will examine one JSL classroom.

The Study

In the following, I will look at one JSL classroom with a focus on how classroom practices of the JSL teacher socialize students into classroom norms and into the norms of Japanese culture. As both Poole (1992) and Ohta (1999) argue, foreign or second language classrooms are the important social contexts in which implicit language socialization occurs. Through the language teacher's use of the language and interactional management, learners come to understand expected cultural norms in the target culture. In this paper, I will briefly discuss (a) how the teacher's teaching practices demonstrate Japanese norms of affective stance and interactional patterns, and (b) in what aspect her teaching practices deviate from Japanese norms.

The data for the present study comes from a 100-minute audio- and video-recorded JSL class. There were four students in the class. They were enrolled in a mid-beginning level speaking class taught by a Japanese teacher in the Continuing Education Program at an American university in Tokyo. Kate is Australian who teaches English at a junior high school, John is Canadian who teaches English at high school, Jack is American who is an actor-to-be, and Anna is a Mexican businesswoman who is fluent both in English and Spanish. The teacher,

Humi, is a native speaker of Japanese who received Master of Education degree from the American university and has been teaching Japanese for approximately six years in Japan.

A 100-minute lesson was video- and audio-recorded at the university, and the researcher attended and participated in the class peripherally. The video camera was placed in front of the students throughout the lesson and the audiocassette recorder was placed at a desk in front of the teacher.

Results

Overview of the Lesson

The lesson can be divided into five parts. In the first part, the teacher and students talked about how they spent their weekend for approximately 10 minutes. In the second part, they reviewed what they had studied in the previous week for approximately 20 minutes. In the third part, they watched a video dialogue and did some exercises based on the video for about 40 minutes. In the fourth part, they practiced semiscripted mini-dialogue for approximately 30 minutes. Finally in the fifth part, a new expression was introduced and role-playing gesture games based on the expression were played for approximately 15 minutes. Although the whole lesson was analyzed by watching the video repeatedly, the third part in which the teacher and students watched and practiced a video dialogue was not transcribed because there was not much teacher-student and student-student interaction. A simplified version of the Jefferson transcription system (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984) was used for transcribing the data (see Appendix). In the transcription, original Japanese utterance was typed in the first line, morpheme-by-morpheme translation was indicated in the second line, and idiomatic English translation was indicated in the third line.

Socializing Students into Japanese Norms

Affective stance

According to Ochs (1996), affective stance is one of the socio-cultural dimensions a member of a culture employs to be part of the situation at hand, and refers to "a mood, attitude, feeling, and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity vis-à-vis some focus of concern" (p. 410). Ochs argues that affective stance is one of the central and basic linguistic resources for constructing social acts and social identities. These affects that are indexed by linguistic forms and structures help define acts. Examples of linguistic forms that index affects in Japanese are a variety of final particles such as *ne*, *yo*, and *sa*. Cook (1990) showed that in Japanese, affective stance is often shown through the use of affective particles such as *ne*, and Ohta (1999) argues that acquisition of affective particle is critical for socializing in Japanese. Examples of linguistic structures that index affective intensity are emphatic stress, loudness, syllable lengthening, intensifying adverbs, interjections, and repetitions (Ochs, 1996). Examples of speech acts that can be defined by affective stance include teasing, begging, apologizing, praising, insulting,

complimenting, assessing, blessing, accusing, and so on (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989).

In the present data, it was found that the teacher's affective stance was implicitly indexed by linguistic forms and structures that also indexed associated social acts such as praising, apologizing, and blaming.

Praising. When the teacher praised the students for their successful completion of tasks, she often demonstrated her affective stance through linguistic structures and forms that index affective intensity such as loudness, emphatic stress, syllable lengthening, and the use of affective particle *ne* as seen in example (1).

(1)

((Kate is making a gesture and the other students are making a guess on what she is doing. Kate, Jack, and John are students and Humi is a teacher.))

1. Kate: ((smiling))

2. Jack: *ureshi sou?*
   happy seems
   "(you) look happy?"

3. Kate: *un.*
   Uh-huh
   "Uh-huh"

4. Kate: ((making a gesture of 'picking up money'))

5. Jack: *okane o hirot te* (.) *hirot ta n desu:*
   Money Acc pick up.cont pick up past NR POL
   "You picked up money and, you picked up money"

6. Humi: *ka.*
   Q

10. Jack: *ka*
    Q

11. Kate: *hai.*
    yes
    "yes"

⟶12. Humi: *O::: John san nanka mite nai janai no:::?*

oh John TL somehow look NEG TAG IP

"Oh, (it was so fast that) John even missed that, didn't he."

13. Humi: *SUGO::KU jouzu dat ta noni ne:::*

very good Aux past though IP

"It was really good."

In the example above, in lines 12 and 13, Humi (the teacher) praises Jack for his quick guessing. In doing so, her affective stance is demonstrated in the lengthening of vowels (*mite naijanaino:::, SUGO::KU, ne:::*), loudness and emphatic stress (*SUGO::KU*), and the use of *ne*.

Apologizing. Linguistic structures and forms that index affective intensity were also present when the teacher apologized to the students, as seen in example (2).

(2)

((The students are doing a role-playing gesture games. They played roles based on the instruction sheets the teacher distributed earlier. Everyone except Anna has finished doing the role-play.))

1. Humi: *saa Anna san saigo. (.) Anna san yatte nai ne.*

well Anna TL last Anna TL do NEG IP

"Well, Anna, you are the last. You did not do, Anna, did you?"

2. Anna: *ari mase n.*

exist POL NEG

"I don't have one."

3. Humi: *mada ne.*

Yet IP

"not yet"

4. Anna: *kore wa onaji no.*

this Top same one

"This is the same one."

5. Humi: *USO.* [oh no::

lie

"You're kidding."

6. Anna: *[honto.*
really
"Really."

→7. Humi: *GOMEN NE:::.*
Sorry IP
"I'm sorry."

8. Anna: I don't know. I don't want to.

9. Humi: *watashi chanto kazu kazoe ta noni.*
I properly number count Past though
"I made sure that I counted the number."

In line 7, as the teacher realizes that she passed Anna a role-play sheet that had been already played, the teacher apologizes to Anna. Her utterance *GOMEN NE:::* is marked with loudness, vowel lengthening, and the use of *ne*.

Blaming the task difficulty. When the students failed to complete tasks successfully, the teacher often attributed the students' failure to the task difficulty. This is similar to what Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) called "the masking of incompetence" (p. 287) in WMCA child-adult interaction. Ochs and Schieffelin found that adults cover up children's incompetence by: (a) simplifying the speech; and (b) interprete what the children are expressing. Poole (1992) also found the same strategies among ESL teacher-student interaction. In my data, besides simplifying the speech and interpreting what the students are expressing, the teacher also "masked" the students' incompetence by blaming the task difficulty. Consider example (3).

(3)

((The teacher and students are reviewing the exercises on the textbook that they had done in the previous week.))

1. Humi: *John san tabako o sut temo ii ii desu ka:?*
John TL cigarette Acc smoke if ok ok POL Q
"John, is it OK, OK that I smoke?"

2. John: *u::::n tabako o: a::: °suu:::°*
Hmmmm cigarette Acc uhmmm smoke
"Hmmmm, cigarette, uhmmm, smoke,"

——→3. Humi: *un.* *suu* *no* *nai* form *wa* *muzukasii* *desu* *ne:::.*
uh-huh smoke Gen NEG form Top difficult POL IP
"Uh-huh. Negation form of smoke is difficult, isn't it."

4. John: *suwa* *nai?*
smoke NEG
"Don't smoke."

5. Humi: *>sou* *sou* *sou.<*
right right right
"Right right right."

The instructional content the teacher and students are working on in the example above is what they had already done in the previous week. Therefore, the negation form of smoke, which is the focus of this segment, had been covered once in class previously. However, in line 2, John has difficulty remembering the word, and his difficulty is shown in his use of non-lexical perturbations (*u:::n, a:::*) and sound stretches (*tabakoo:, suu:::*). Then in line 3, the teacher attributes his failure to remember the word to the difficulty of the negation form of smoke, and the utterance is marked with affective particle *ne* with elongated and falling intonation at the end. Compared with short *ne* with rising intonation, elongated *ne* with falling intonation has been claimed to show greater affect (Ohta, 1999) and demonstrates the objectivity of the information (Jorden, 1987). Thus, in this example, through the use of elongated *ne* with falling intonation, the teacher shows affect and at the same time she expresses that the task is too difficult viewed objectively.

In addition to social acts, the teacher's affective stance was reflected in the interactional pattern of the class, which I will discuss below.

Interactional Pattern

Analysis of the data has revealed that the teacher's practices also conveyed a certain type of interactional patterns in the class. Cook (1999), who examined five elementary school classrooms in Japan, found that Japanese classroom interactional patterns require students to listen to their peers to a great degree and as a result, the students learn the attentive listening skills. The author shows that the teachers in her data facilitates students' listening by writing important points of students' presentations as well as by creating a lot of opportunities for the students to react to their students. In my data, the teacher also facilitated students' attentive listening by constantly writing important points of the students' presentations and by creating opportunities to listen to their peers through distribution of reaction turns to everyone, as seen in the example below. Prior to the segment, the teacher asked Kate what she did on the weekend.

(4)

1. Kate: *AA AA AA Nikkou (ni) it ta.*
   Oh oh oh Nikko to go past
   "Oh, oh, oh, {I} went to Nikko."

2. Humi: *Nikkou ni it ta?*
   Nikko to go past
   "{you} went to Nikko?"

3. Kate: *u[n]*
   Uh – huh
   "Uh – huh."

4. Humi: *[u]n.*
   Uh – huh
   "Uh – huh."

5. Kate: *shu shuumatu wa.* =
   Weekend Top
   "On the weekend."

6. Humi: =*un.* =
   Uh – huh
   "Uh – huh."

7. Kate: =*Nikkou ni it ta.*
   Nikko to go past
   "{I} went to Nikko."

→8. Humi: *aa hontouni.((to Jack)) Nikkou wa it ta koto ari masu ka?*
   Oh really Nikko Top go past time exist POL Q
   "Oh really. Have you been to Nikko?"

9. Jack: *nai desu.*
   NEG POL
   "I haven't."

——→10. Humi: *John san wa?*

John TL Top

"How about you, John?"

11. John: *it ta.*

go past

"I went {there}."

In the example above, although who the teacher asked about the weekend was Kate, as soon as the teacher understands that Kate went to Nikko, she asks whether the other students, Jack and John, have been to Nikko in lines 8 and 10. In this way, she creates the opportunities for Jack and John to talk on the topic Kate has mentioned. As in the example, after asking a question to one student, the teacher often asked for comments from the peer students in relation to the student's answer.

In sum, the teacher's practices in the class conveyed the students Japanese classroom norms and norms of Japanese culture through her display of affective stance and employment of typical Japanese classroom interactional patterns. However, a certain aspect of the teacher's teaching practices deviated from Japanese norms, which I will discuss next.

Non-Japanese Norms

It is often said that Japanese socio-cultural context is highly hierarchical (e.g., LoCastro, 1996) and it is reflected in the classroom norms: in the majority of language classrooms in Japan, the teacher-fronted classroom practices are still the norms and the teacher is seen to have an absolute power in classrooms. However, examination of the present data showed that the teacher constantly tried to avoid the display of her power in the class, which is not the norm of Japanese classrooms. Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) discuss the attempts by WMCA caretakers to reduce the competence gap with children. Similarly, Poole (1992), who examined ESL classrooms in the U. S., found that the tendency among the American teachers to avoid overt display of asymmetrical relationships between the teacher and students. The teachers in Pool's study attempted to avoid the display of asymmetry by using first person plural markers to reduce the force of directives in task openings. Interestingly, this tendency to reduce the force of directives by the teacher is also found in the present data. When the teacher tried to move on to and introduce a new activity, the teacher consistently used ~*simashou* "Let's~" form instead of ~*sinasai* "Do-V" or ~*sitekudasai* "Do-V (polite)." By using ~*simashou* form, the teacher conveyed the students that the task they were going to do will be completed together. Consider examples (5) and (6).

(5)

((The teacher and students finished talking about their weekends and the teacher tries to move on to the review exercises.))

1. Humi: *saa soredewa e::: fukushuu o simashou.*
   Now then uhmmm review Acc let's do
   "Now, then, uhmmm, let's review."

(6)

((The teacher tries to assign Kate to work on the next exercise.))

1. Humi: *e:: (2.0) u::nto ne hai. D. Kate san?*
   Uhmm well IP yes D. Kate TL
   "Uhmm, well, yes, D. Kate?"

——→2. *sonomama mou moderu no tokoro kara iki mashou.*
   leave as it is already model Gen place from go let's
   "Let's {read} the model itself."

In the examples above, in addition to the use of ~*simashou* form, the teacher's elaboration to avoid the display of power difference is seen in her use of non-lexical perturbations and pauses, as the teachers in Poole's study did.

Thus, the teacher in the present data attempted to avoid the display of asymmetry. However, the tendency to reduce the power difference is the norm of American classroom interaction, not Japanese. As mentioned above, the teacher in the data received Master's degree from the American university, in which teacher trainings are provided in American norms. Therefore, the teacher may have socialized into the norms of American classrooms during her trainings at the university. Ohta (1994) showed how teachers' educational background reflects their ways of teaching. Ohta found that the teacher who had no formal trainings in communicative methods used less markers of communicative stance (i.e. affective stance) than the teachers who were formally trained with communicative methods. Thus, in this study, the teacher's deviation from norms of Japanese classrooms may be explained in terms of her educational background.

Conclusion

The present study looked at the classroom practices of one JSL teacher and briefly examined how these practices socialize students into classroom norms and into the norms of Japanese culture. It was found that: (a) the teacher implicitly conveyed the students the norms of Japanese classrooms and culture through her display of affective stance and typical Japanese

classroom interactional patterns; however, (b) because of her educational background, the teacher's certain practice, specifically the tendency of avoiding display of power differences, reflected American culture instead of Japanese culture. In sum, the teacher's teaching practices encoded norms of both her native language culture and her educational background.

As Ohta (1991) argues, compared to learning a language in foreign language (FL) settings, in second language (SL) settings, the students have better chance to learn socio-cultural norms through real interaction with experts. However, since even in second language settings, cultural knowledge is often said to lag behind linguistic knowledge (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984), it may be important not only for FL teachers but also for SL teachers to constantly socialize students into the norms of target culture through daily or weekly classroom practices.

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Appendix

Transcription Conventions for the Analysis of Conversation

Abbreviations used in Interlinear Gross

IP	Interactional particle (e.g., *ne, sa, no, yo, na*)
Nom	Nominative (*-ga*)
Acc	Accusative (*-o*)
Gen	Genitive (*-no*)
Top	Topic marker (*-wa*)
PT	other particles
COMP	Complimentizer (*-to, -tte*)
Q	Question marker (*ka* and its variants)
POL	Politeness marker (*desu, masu*)
Aux	Auxiliary (be-verb)
NR	Nominalizer (e.g., *no, n*)
TAG	tag question like auxiliary verb forms (e.g., *desho, janai, daroo, jan*)
TL	title
ONO	Onomatopoetic expressions
PASS	Passive
NEG	for marking negation
CAU	causative

Transcription Conventions

[ ]	overlapping talk
=	latched utterances
(0.0)	timed pause (in seconds)
(.)	a short pause
co:lon	extension of the sound or syllable
co::lon	a more prolonged stretch
.	fall in intonation (final)
,	continuing intonation (non-final)
?	rising intonation (final)
CAPITAL	emphasis
° °	passage of talk that is quieter than surrounding talk
< >	passage of talk that is slower than surrounding talk
> <	passage of talk that is faster than surrounding talk
hh	audible aspirations

**hh*	audible inhalations
(*hh*)	laughter within a word
(( ))	comment by the transcriber
( )	problematic hearing that the transcriber is not certain about
" "	Idiomatic translation of Japanese utterances
In idiomatic translation,	
{ }	words or phrases which are not explicitly stated in the Japanese versions

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